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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: SCA DAS KROL DISCUSSES BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP  
WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER UMAROV

ASTANA 00001951 001.2 OF 003

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: During an October 29 meeting, Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov, SCA Deputy Assistant Secretary George Krol, and NSC's Director for Central Asia Kurt Donnelly discussed the upcoming Global Nuclear Security Summit, Kazakhstan's desire for a meeting between Presidents Obama and Nazarbayev, the proposed Annual Bilateral Consultations, and the possibility of a summit during Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). END SUMMARY.

"EXTENSIVE" BILATERAL AGENDA

¶3. (SBU) On October 29, Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov told SCA Deputy Assistant Secretary George Krol and NSC's Director for Central Asia Kurt Donnelly that he is "satisfied with the level of the relationship" and its "extensive agenda." He expressed his hope for further intensification, especially in the coming year with Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April. On the latter, Umarov declared "we have much to say during this summit" before he listed examples of bilateral non-proliferation cooperation, including the Comprehensive Threat Reduction Program (CTR). Looking to the future of the relationship, which he termed "even more promising," Umarov highlighted Kazakhstan's proposed international fuel bank. Umarov declared the plan's strength, noting Kazakhstan's socio-political stability, respectability throughout the region and beyond, foreign policy predictability, existing infrastructure, and strong export-control regime. He concluded by welcoming the proposed changes to Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP), as explained during Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman's recent visit to Kazakhstan.

¶4. (SBU) Krol agreed on the depth of the relationship and extensiveness of the agenda. He noted the U.S. government's appreciation for Kazakhstan's important role in this geo-politically sensitive part of the world. Highlighting cooperation in non-proliferation, Krol acknowledged the fuel bank proposal before the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). He also noted the active engagement of the United States on Kazakhstan's membership in

an IAEA regional group, which would allow Kazakhstan to pursue a seat on the board of governors.

#### BILATERAL AT GLOBAL NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT?

15. (SBU) On the Global Nuclear Security Summit, Umarov argued the importance of a meeting between Presidents Obama and Nazarbayev, "because it would pave the way for future cooperation and intensification of the bilateral relationship," as well as develop the "personal chemistry" between the two leaders. He asserted that the bilateral agenda is already substantive, and enumerated "three important issues -- non-proliferation, Afghanistan's stability, and the OSCE Chairmanship." He continued that "because the Chairmanship is important for Kazakhstan and the whole region, serving as an example for others to develop in the same way, the United States should show its support of Kazakhstan and its initiatives." He further asserted Kazakhstan's unique position to work on issues due to its "acceptability and closeness to all countries -- the EU, United States, China, and Russia."

16. (SBU) Krol thanked Umarov and the Kazakhstani government for its cooperation on the commercial transit of non-lethal supplies for U.S. troops in Afghanistan via the Northern Distribution Network. He also highlighted the proposal to send officers to the ISAF headquarters in Kabul and fund higher education in Kazakhstan for Afghans. Acknowledging Kazakhstan's geo-political importance, Krol suggested that not all Kazakhstan's neighbors have positive feelings about its leadership, but stated his hope for the development of constructive relationships, especially with Uzbekistan.

17. (SBU) On the proposed bilateral meeting at the Global Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in April 2010, NSC Director Donnelly explained the intense competition that will occur to determine which

ASTANA 00001951 002.2 OF 003

of the 30 heads of state will meet bilaterally with President Obama.

Although some in Washington have expressed their positive inclination, Kazakhstan needs to do more. Donnelly described the current disappointment in the human rights community regarding the irregularities in the trial and appeal of prominent human rights defender Yevgeniy Zhovtis. "This is a serious issue that could trump all others in the consideration of a bilateral meeting," Donnelly said frankly.

18. (SBU) Umarov again expressed his conviction that the meeting should occur, saying that the areas of cooperation "should not be overshadowed by Zhovtis." Regarding Zhovtis, Umarov asserted the independence of Kazakhstan's judiciary. "President Nazarbayev cannot just call and make him free. You said the judiciary should be independent, but now you think it should be influenced." Umarov concluded by offering his assistance to raise issues that are important to the U.S. government, stating that we "will be sorry if we miss this opportunity."

#### ANNUAL BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS

19. (SBU) Umarov stated Kazakhstan's "appreciation and positive consideration" of the proposed Annual Bilateral Consultations (ABC), and then asked that the two Presidents be the "honorary chairmen" and Secretary of State and Foreign Minister "coordinating partners." To combine "symbolism with the practical," he said, "the rest of the work would be done by bureaucrats, but some issues are resolved easier when the heads of State are involved." Addressing the concern that other Central Asian countries would demand their presidents as honorary chairman, Umarov asserted that "objectively, they will not, because they will naturally accept it due to the high level of our cooperation." President Nazarbayev is committed to the relationship, he stated, and will "do much to move it ahead."

110. (SBU) DAS Krol and Donnelly responded that it is unlikely the White House would respond positively to the notion of the Presidents as honorary chairmen. Both noted that the two sides could raise issues to the Presidents without them being honorary chairmen. Krol explained that the intention of the ABC is to focus on achieving results at the working-level, not establishing a presidential commission. Umarov countered that many issues need to be resolved

at the highest level, and the ABC could be a good mechanism to move the relationship forward at the highest level. Cutting to the obvious crux of the issue, MFA Director of the Americas Desk, Askar Tazhiyev, said frankly that some in Kazakhstan wonder if the relationship remains a "strategic partnership" since President Obama is heading the Presidential Commission with Russia. "You are upgrading Russia, and downgrading us." Krol countered that the relationship with Russia is very different and more problematic than the relationship with Kazakhstan. "We tend to model our relationship differently with a country like Kazakhstan with whom we have fewer problems. It is a sign that our relationship is more like our partnership with an ally, than with Russia."

#### OSCE SUMMIT

¶11. (SBU) In response to Umarov's plea to support an OSCE Summit in Kazakhstan, Krol and Donnelly responded that the proposal is under consideration in Washington, but many issues remain, especially questions of the summit's substance and President Obama's availability. Although the United States finds a Kazakhstani-sponsored meeting on Afghanistan potentially attractive, a summit on any other issue, such as European security, would be questionable. Umarov again emphasized Kazakhstan's plea for U.S. support and President Obama's attendance. Although some countries (i.e. Russia) object, Umarov stated, Kazakhstan believes the situation in Afghanistan merits an OSCE summit and will thus propose this topic. Highlighting the lack of an OSCE summit for the past 10 years, Umarov asserted the necessity of one "to move the OSCE forward." Still, Umarov acknowledged that "although the highest level is best, higher level is good." Krol concluded that the summit issue would probably need to be decided before the December 1-2 Athens Ministerial.

ASTANA 00001951 003.2 OF 003

#### UPCOMING TRAVEL

¶12. (SBU) To move the ABC forward, Umarov plans to visit Washington November 19-20 before the Kazakhstan Investment Forum in New York City. According to Umarov, Foreign Minister Saudabayev hopes to travel to Washington in late January to present the priorities of their OSCE Chairmanship, fine tune the modalities of President Nazarbayev's April visit, and discuss bilateral issues. He expressed his hope that the Foreign Minister will meet Secretary Clinton and Vice President Biden at that time. In addition, he pressed for visits to Kazakhstan in the coming year by both President Obama and Secretary Clinton. Krol also told Umarov that Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Robert Blake might travel to Kazakhstan in December. Umarov welcomed this visit.

¶13. (SBU) COMMENT: Krol and Donnelly tried hard to manage Kazakhstani expectations of turning a possible April presidential bilateral into a presidential inauguration of the Annual Bilateral Consultations, but it is clear the Kazakhstanis are under orders probably from FM Saudabayev to pursue this and the OSCE Summit doggedly. The Kazakhstanis are also obviously sensitive to being treated in any lesser fashion than the Russians -- something we have to keep in mind as we develop our relationship with Astana.

¶14. (U) DAS Krol and Director Donnelly cleared this cable.

HOAGLAND